

# Space News ROUNDUP!

VOL. 37 NO. 4

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

February 27, 1998

## In this issue



Astronauts simulate International Space Station maintenance underwater.

Page 2



JSC engineers spread the word about their chosen profession during February.

Page 3



Atlantis gets a new cockpit while undergoing routine refurbishment in California.

Page 4



Trail riders camp out beneath starry skies after a stormy welcome to JSC.

Page 5



John Glenn made history 36 years ago as the first American to orbit the Earth.

Page 6



Thirty JSC workers earn choice seats for spectacular STS-89 launch.

Page 7

## Thomas starts research in 'bizarre' setting

New crew celebrates Mir's 25th anniversary; old crew comes home

Astronaut Andy Thomas reports that life aboard the Russian Mir Space Station is "unusual, if not bizarre," but that he's acclimating well, getting to know his new crew mates and beginning his scientific research.

Thomas provided the status updates in a television downlink interview and via the first of his "Letters from the Outpost" that are being made available on the NASA Shuttle-Mir Web site. His first letter deals mainly with his Jan. 22 launch aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* and ends with a promise to discuss rendezvous and docking next. "As I undertake this extended stay

on the Mir Space Station, I am adapting to a lifestyle that can certainly be called unusual, if not bizarre. Perhaps it even defies adequate description," Thomas wrote. "I hope to find time, over the coming months, to describe the sensations of the flight and some of the events that make this experience so unique."

In a televised Cable News Network interview, Thomas said that living aboard Mir has been a big adjustment.

"As you can imagine, learning to live and function on a day-to-day basis permanently in zero gravity is (a big adjustment). And moving in

here is a bit like, if you can imagine, moving into a new house, and you imagine you have boxes of things all over the floor and you have to step around them. Well, up here, the problem's a little different, and that difference is the problem of zero gravity. The boxes—or in our case bags—are not just on the floor, they're on the walls, on the ceiling and floating everywhere, so it was a packing nightmare for a little while to get everything stowed and to figure out what I needed to function," he said. "But once I'd done that, things settled down quite well and now I'm getting into a nice routine of life."

Please see **THOMAS**, Page 8



U.S. Astronaut Andy Thomas participates in his first downlink interview, with CNN, from his new home aboard Mir. Thomas called his new surroundings "unusual, if not bizarre."



NASA Photo by Benny Benavides

**STS-95 crew members meet the press in JSC's Bldg. 2 Teague Auditorium on Feb. 20. Mission Specialist Steve Robinson, Payload Specialist John Glenn, Pilot Steve Lindsey, Commander Curt Brown, Mission Specialists Scott Parazynski and Pedro Duque, and Payload Specialist Chiaki Mukai. Duque is representing the European Space Agency, while Mukai is representing NASDA, the Japanese space agency.**

## March is Women's History Month

NASA will be observing National Women's History Month in March, as well as the 150th Anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement, which will be celebrated throughout 1998.

NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin sent a letter to all center directors supporting the observance of the month and encouraging all NASA employees to recognize the contributions of women to the world.

"The national theme for National Women's History Month, 'Living the Legacy of Women's Rights,' refers to the many ways in which women's lives have changed because of the Women's Rights Movement," Goldin wrote. "The freedoms and opportunities women now have are the results of the risks and sacrifices of our foremothers. The Women's Rights Movement has had a profound impact on all

aspects of American life. It has opened new and well-deserved opportunities for women in all fields of endeavor, including commerce, athletics, business, education, religion, the arts, engineering, and scientific exploration.

"Today, women of all ages are living the legacy of women's rights that seven generations of women before them have given their best to achieve," he continued.

"I fully support the observance of National Women's History Month and the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement. "I encourage everyone at NASA to mark not only this month but the entire year with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that will highlight the contributions of the unsung heroines who helped to make our nation strong and a leader throughout the free world."

## School district to break ground on JSC corner

Clear Creek Independent School District will break ground March 2 for its new intermediate school on the grounds of JSC.

Dr. John E. Wilson, superintendent Clear Creek ISD; Sophia LeCour, president of board of trustees for CCISD; and JSC Director George Abbey will be among a group of JSC, school district, local government, community and business leaders attending the ceremony.

Work to prepare the site on 35 acres at the southwest corner of JSC, directly north of Space Center Houston, will begin immediately. The \$13 million bond-financed school is expected to be completed for occupancy by the fall of 1999.

The school is being erected as part of a collaborative education venture between JSC and the district. The long-term lease represents a "first of its kind" partnership between a NASA center and a local school district, and provides the opportunity to combine the scientific and technical expertise of JSC with the teaching skills of the CCISD faculty, furthering development of the science

Please see **SCHOOL**, Page 2

## Brown says research only STS-95 goal

By Kelly Humphries

Commander Curt Brown and the rest of the STS-95 crew said last week they are excited about opening a new chapter in space physiology research with their October mission, and that they are looking forward to flying with an American hero.

Brown and the crew met the news media earlier than normal for a pre-flight briefing last Friday because of interest in Sen. John Glenn's participation as a payload specialist.

Brown said he is honored to be flying with Glenn, who made America's first orbital space flight in a tiny Mercury capsule on Feb. 20, 1962, and noted that this mission will be significantly longer. Coincidentally, the news conference occurred on the 36th anniversary of Glenn's Mercury flight.

"Without Sen. Glenn's courage back in 1962 to make that historic flight, we probably would not be here today talking about STS-95 and our exciting mission in October," Brown said. "The one thing I did promise Sen. Glenn was his second flight will be quite a bit longer than his first."

Glenn admitted he has a personal interest in making the flight, but said the primary reason is to kick off a new realm of research in cooperation with the National Institute on Aging to use the space environment as a tool to better understand the correlation between the aging process on Earth and the physiological effects of space flight on the human body.

"This is basic, fundamental research," Glenn said. "We have some 35 million Americans that are over the age of 65. If we can figure out what triggers the body's mechanisms on and off, it will help astronauts who are younger to attenuate some of these things in space, or to help older people on Earth escape some of the frailties of old age."

The flight crew's assignment to the flight was announced

Please see **STS-95**, Page 8



Drawing courtesy Clear Creek Independent School District

This architectural rendering of the site of the new Clear Creek Independent School District's intermediate school shows its location in relation to Space Center Houston, directly above in the drawing, and JSC, in the upper left hand corner. Site work is scheduled to begin immediately for the school, with construction expected to be complete by the fall of 1999.